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Nations in Prophecy

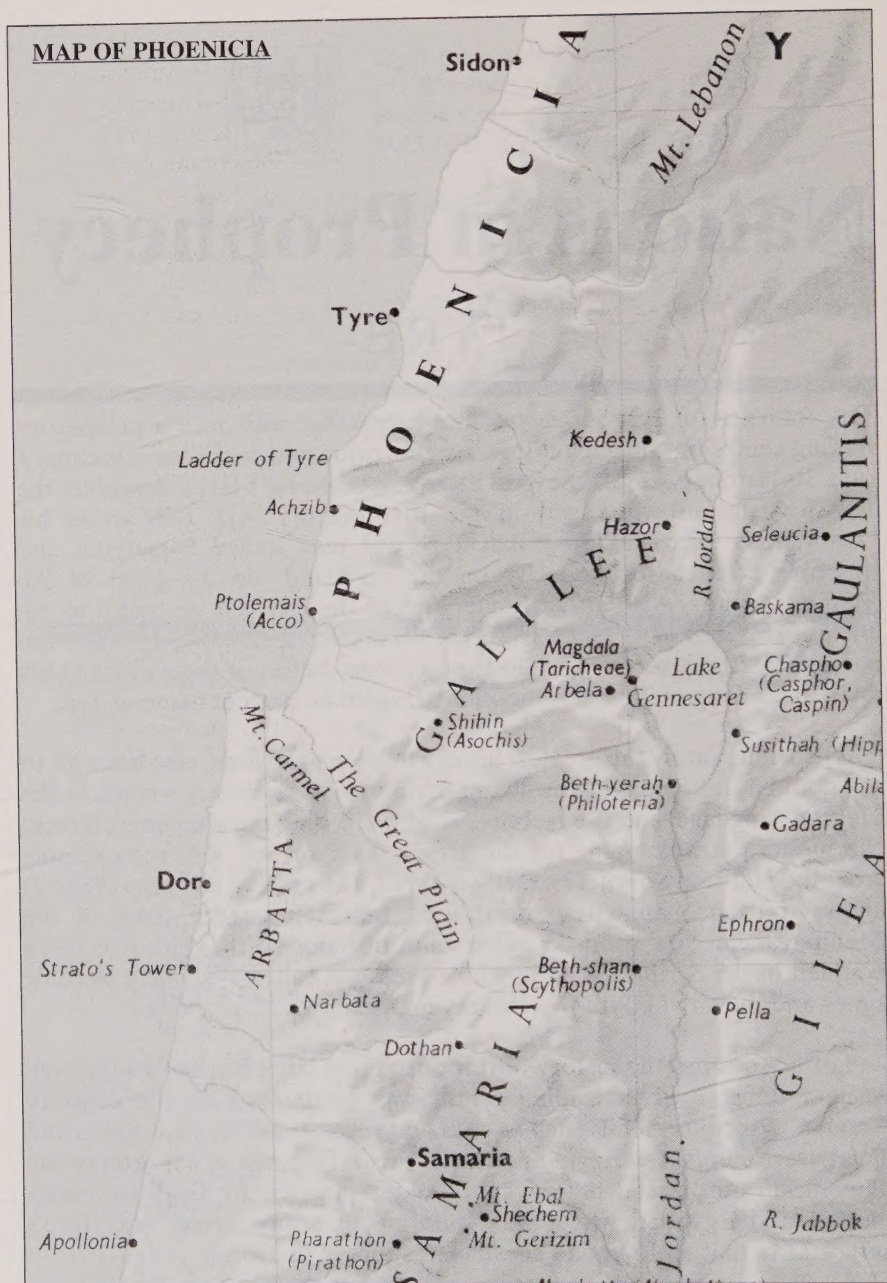
TYRE

THE HISTORY OF Tyre is the story of a city that was once a prosperous trading centre but through it's own greed, pride and wickedness became a ruin. Its history goes back several thousand years, for Flavius Josephus, the Jewish historian who lived in the first century AD, tells us in his "Antiquities Of The Jews" that Tyre was once called Palaetyrus, and describes it as a fortified city on the mainland, on the coast of the Mediterranean. Also an early mention of the city can be found in the British Museum on a tablet from the library of Assurbanipal, where the son of Tiglathpileser I asks help from various deities of the nations (1100 BC), and a king of Tsur-ri is mentioned, again an ancient name of Tyre.

The Bible, surely the greatest history book ever written, also has a lot to say about Tyre. The Old Testament Scriptures were mainly written in the Hebrew language, and the Hebrew word for Tyre is Tyros meaning a rock; the modern Arabic name for the area is Tsur or Sur, also recognizable from the Hebrew. So where exactly is Tyre? The present day map (Page 2) shows it to be situated in north-west Lebanon on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, some 25 miles south of Sidon, with which it is often coupled in the Scriptures. The whole area was called Phoenicia in Bible times and the city of Tyre was its very important trading centre.

Let us consider the history of this once great city. We know that from ancient times, a great trading centre was established on the coast of Canaan. Precious metals such as gold and silver, together with spices and linen, were shipped to Egypt and Crete. Also, Tyre was an exporter of the Phoenician purple and blue dyes to colour the wealthy Egyptian ladies clothes and Egyptian wheat was imported in return. Such was Tyre's importance that an Egyptian consul was situated in Tyre.

MAP OF PHOENICIA



Then the Bible tells us that after the Jews left Egypt under Moses they journeyed towards the Promised Land, about 1500 years before the birth of Christ. Their next leader, Joshua, divided the Land between the twelve tribes. Tyre, the *strong city* as the Bible describes it, became the lot of the tribe of Asher.¹ It was then a Phoenician city and the command by God to the Jews was to ‘...drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you...dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein....’² This they failed to do and their disobedience to God’s command was to lead them into absorbing the ways of the idolatrous nations around them, including the worship of the Tyrian gods Baal and Astarte, male and female gods, representing the sun and moon.³

Tyre was the capital city of Phoenicia, and has been described as a city of perhaps the most industrious and active people ever known. It’s riches were so great that in about 1000 BC it made a contribution to the building of the temple under Solomon; for King Hiram promised to provide ‘cedar and pine logs’⁴ in exchange for wheat and olive oil. Josephus records that Hiram also contributed a great deal of gold and more silver to these buildings, and a Tyrian worker, a craftsman in bronze helped in the building of the temple. A later king of Tyre, Ethbaal, was the father of Jezebel, and father-in-law to King Ahab of Israel, he of whom the Bible records:

‘Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him. He... began to serve Baal and worship him. He ... did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than did all the kings of Israel before him.’⁵

Baal was the sun god of the Phoenicians, the god of Tyre; Ahab even built a temple to this false god in Samaria. This was the time of Elijah the Tishbite; probably the greatest prophet in Israel since the days of Moses. It is not part of this article to consider the life of Elijah, and the destruction with God’s help, of the prophets of Baal. We can however recommend the reader to turn to the Bible narrative of these events in I Kings chapter 18 for further interesting reading. What must be said is that the worship of false gods was rife in the land of Israel. Even Ahab’s son, not having learnt any lessons from his father, sent messengers to consult with Baal-zebul, the ‘fly god’ of Ekron.

As a result of Tyre’s idolatry and great pride, Jeremiah prophesied that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon would punish the city. It is probable that

¹Joshua 19.29 ²Numbers 33.52,53 ³Judges 2.3 ⁴1 Kings 5.8 NIV ⁵1 Kings 16.30-33 NIV

after Nebuchadnezzar had vanquished Israel, Tyre considered itself to be safe and laughed at Israel's misfortune; for the prophet Ezekiel records *'...because Tyre has said of Jerusalem, "Aha! The gate to the nations is broken, and its doors have swung open to me; now that she lies in ruins I will prosper"'*.⁶ Tyre did not prosper and the prophet goes on to tell of the forthcoming fate of Tyre in these words:

*'He (the king of Babylon) will ravage your settlements on the mainland with the sword...You will never be rebuilt, for I the LORD have spoken...'*⁷

Eventually, the mainland city of Tyre was completely destroyed after a thirteen year siege; and because of Nebuchadnezzar's long and arduous campaign, *'...every head was rubbed bare and every shoulder made raw. Yet he and his army got no reward from the campaign he led against Tyre.'*⁸ But

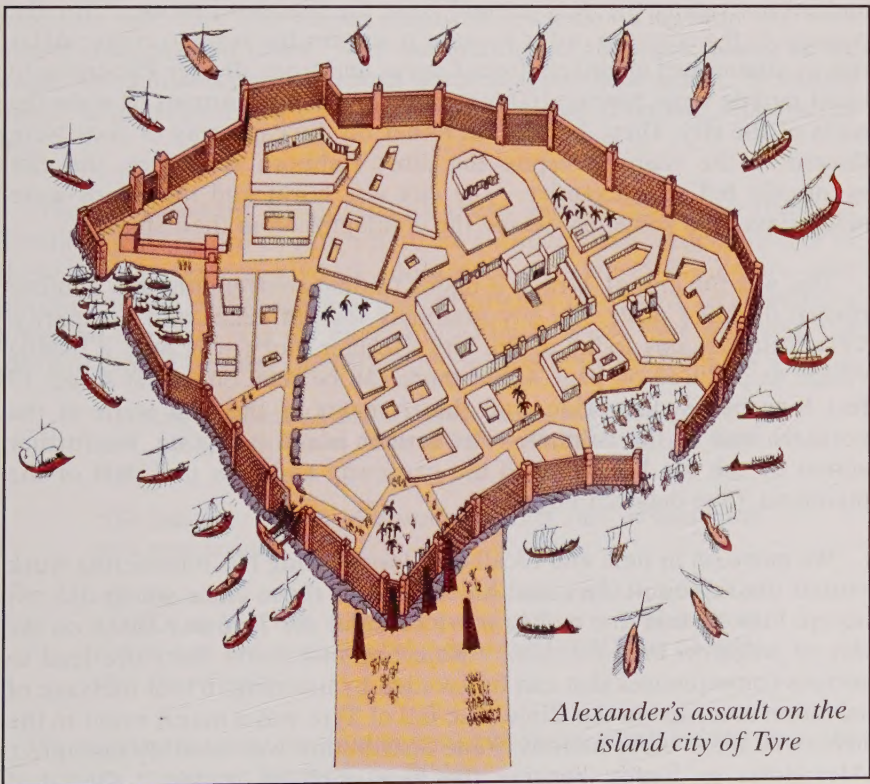


Fishermen tending their nets at Tyre

⁶Ezekiel 26.2 NIV ⁷Ezekiel 26.8-14 NIV ⁸Ezekiel 29.18 NIV

it is the Almighty who rules over the affairs of men and the prophet records that the king was given *'Egypt as a reward for his efforts because he and his army did it for me, declares the Sovereign LORD.'*⁹

When the seventy years of servitude to Babylon was over, the Persian king Cyrus became the ruler over the empire of Babylon. Tyre was rebuilt, not on the mainland, but on an island, half a mile off-shore from the old site. This became the new city of Tyre, fortified and strengthened by walls nearly one hundred and fifty feet high. There the inhabitants resumed their trade with the surrounding nations, protected by their walls and the surrounding sea. Pride in their security led them to say *'...I am a God, I sit in the seat of God...'* and of the Tyrians *'Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty...'*¹⁰



Alexander's assault on the island city of Tyre

⁹Ezekiel 29.20 NIV ¹⁰Ezekiel 28.2,17

However the prophecies concerning the fall of the city were not completely fulfilled at that time. Not until the times of Alexander the Great was the city completely destroyed, in 332 BC. Alexander the Macedonian had united the Greeks and defeated the Persian armies and was engaged in extending his authority over the surrounding lands. He marched into Phoenicia, and Sidon surrendered to him without a fight but Tyre was determined to remain free and independent, thinking themselves safe. Alexander attacked Tyre by sea, but lost many ships and men (Page 5). The fighting between the two sides was very bitter, all prisoners were killed and Alexander became even more determined to take the city.

He then built a 2000 feet causeway, using the remains of the old city and even scraping the very ground from the mainland to use it for the passage to the island in order to make a way for his army to cross. After this he summoned engineers from Cyprus and from all over Phoenicia to build mobile siege towers, 160 feet high, to assist his armies to scale the walls of the city. These he erected either on the causeway or they were floated to the island. Despite the most stubborn resistance, the city eventually fell to Alexander. The city was burnt and thousands were made slaves but some did escape the conflagration in their ships.

This was the end of Tyre as a major trading centre; although a minor revival did take place, the city gradually lost influence and prosperity. Very little remains today of the city's former glory, it is only a fishing village as pictured on page 4; but there can be seen one great stone, 17 feet long by 6½ feet wide - all that remains of the vast walls at the northern end of the isthmus. The former island has gone, for further action by the sea has widened the causeway and now it is part of the mainland. (See diagram Page 8) .

We move on in time and recall that Jesus during His ministering work visited the region of Tyre and Sidon; and to those cities which did not accept him, he said '*...it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you.*'¹¹ Rejecting him could therefore lead to serious consequences that can be avoided by listening to that message of salvation recorded in the Bible. The fall of Tyre was a major event in the history of these older nations; trade distribution was severely disrupted; Alexandria in Egypt, became the new port for traders. God had

¹¹Matthew 11.22 NIV

punished Tyre because of their idolatry, pride and pleasure in the calamities which had befallen the nation of Israel, God's chosen people.

There are a number of other interesting Bible passages concerning the city of Tyre. For example the prophet Isaiah said of Tyre '*Cross over to Tarshish; wail, you people of the island*' (Tyre).¹² Ezekiel records, '*Tarshish did business with you (Tyre) because of your great wealth of goods; they exchanged silver, iron, tin and lead for your merchandise.*'¹³ According to Encyclopedia Britannica, the name Tarshish is associated with the smelting of precious metals.¹⁴ This name probably refers to parts of the Western Mediterranean which were visited by the Phoenician trading ships where they exchanged their goods for precious metals. It is probable that they also visited Cornwall in Britain where tin has been mined since ancient times. Now the mention of tin is interesting as the name 'Britannia' is derived from a word meaning 'land of tin'. 'Britannia metal' is an alloy made from small quantities of antimony dissolved in tin.

The words of the prophets link these ancient names of Tyre and Tarshish with future events yet to be fulfilled. An understanding of these prophecies can give us confidence that world events are ever pointing to the early return of Jesus Christ to this earth, to establish a kingdom that will last for ever, and to build a city that will echo the glory of God. Consider the following prophetic words from the Psalms:

'The kings of Tarshish and of distant shores will bring tribute to him...All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him.'¹⁵

'The Daughter of Tyre will come with a gift, men of wealth will seek your favour'¹⁶

'All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations.'¹⁷

We believe that time foretold in these prophetic words is very near. We are warned in the last book of the Bible:

¹²Isaiah 23.6 NIV ¹³Ezekiel 27.12 NIV ¹⁴Encyclopedia Britannica (1970 edition) Volume 20 page 1084 ¹⁵Psalms 72.10,11 NIV ¹⁶Psalms 45.12 NIV ¹⁷Psalms 22.27,28 NIV

‘Behold, I (Jesus) am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done ...Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.’¹⁸



Diagram of silted causeway at Tyre today

This city of which we speak is Jerusalem, which unlike Tyre, is to be an eternal city. Are you going to reject the Divine offer of a place in it? Not if you are wise. So turn to God's word, search the Scriptures, for they are the key which opens the door to a full knowledge of God's plan and purpose with this world and how you can be part of it.

Colin Opperman
Witham, Essex

¹⁸Revelation 22.12,14 NIV

Fact or Fiction.

The Flood of Noah's Day

WE LIVE IN an age where the existence of God is disbelieved or ignored. One hundred and fifty years of evolutionary philosophy have devastated the churches and the acceptance of the Bible as the inspired Word of God. The idea that the world-wide flood of Noah's day is a fact, is generally greeted with scorn and contempt.

God has not left Himself without witness. The very rocks themselves, often the ones under our own feet, are witness of a world-wide, mountain covering flood. Contained in vast layers of sedimentary rocks are remains of enormous quantities of plant, animal and marine creatures, swept to their death by flood waters and buried in silt and sand, to become fossils.

Educationalists teach unproven and unprovable theories in our schools and universities, in which the world is said to have existed for billions of years. Life is said to have originated spontaneously, and all living creatures slowly evolved from a common, single celled organism over a long period.

Fossils are claimed to be the evidence of this evolution. Had they remained uncovered for any length of time, they would have been consumed by other creatures. Those who believe the Bible's account of the flood say they were quickly covered and preserved by silt from the flood waters, where they became fossils as the sediments became rocks.

THE GENESIS ACCOUNT OF THE FLOOD

The Bible tells us (see Genesis chapters 6 to 9) that about 1600 years after creation, God decided to completely destroy the human race because of its evil and violence. One man and his family found grace in God's sight. He warned Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives, of His intention to destroy the earth by flood.

They were given details of how to build a ship, an ark in which they, and at least a pair of all air breathing animals could escape destruction. They faithfully responded, and in due course the ark was completed. God made the required animals go into the ark. Then Noah and his family boarded and were shut in by God. Soon, they floated safely, while the whole earth was flooded, and that sinful generation was wiped out.

After many months, the waters subsided and the ark grounded on a mountain. Noah sent out two birds to see if the waters had receded. He sent out a raven, but it just flew to and fro. He sent out a dove several times. When it eventually failed to return, he knew that the earth had dried out. Then God commanded them to leave the ark.

Noah built an altar to offer sacrifices to God. God in turn placed His blessing upon them, and entered into a covenant with them. He promised never to destroy the earth by flood again and the rainbow is His sign of this promise.

THE WORLD BEFORE THE FLOOD

The creation account tells us:

'And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.'¹

This '*firmament*' must have been a large expanse of water. Then the waters under heaven were gathered together in one place and became seas.²

¹Genesis 1.6,7 ²Genesis 1.9,10

We believe that the firmament above was an extremely thick layer of water vapour that had significant implications for understanding the earth's original climate. It acted as a thermal blanket, keeping the sun's warmth in, and keeping harmful ultraviolet rays out. Temperature variations would have been a few degrees day and night, creating a tropical greenhouse effect from pole to pole. With no temperature variations there would have been no wind.

It seems that it had not rained previously on earth. We are told that:

*'...the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth... but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.'*³

In this wonderful environment, men and women would have thrived. Luxuriant tropical forest covered the whole earth. Is it any wonder that the average life span before the flood was much higher than now? After the flood, with this protective layer removed, it is not surprising that the average life span dropped dramatically.

WHERE DID THE WATER COME FROM?

The Bible tells us that *'...the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.'*⁴ Running water has a tremendous erosive effect upon the earth. Small local floods often cause great damage, washing away soil and undermining roads, railways and buildings etc. We have recently seen the phenomenal effect of flooding in Iceland, where vast changes were made to the landscape in a short time.

The scene must have been terrifying when the windows of heaven were opened, and a tremendous torrential rainstorm continued for forty days and nights. Enormous quantities of earth and rock were excavated and transported in quantities impossible to visualize. The rich, deep, virgin soil of the earth's landscape would have been completely reshaped.

The firmament above supplied much of the water required for this world-wide, mountain-covering flood. At the same time as the windows of heaven were opened *'...all the fountains of the great deep (were) broken up....'*⁵ The suggestion in the original Hebrew is that of the waters from

³Genesis 2.5,6 NKJV ⁴Genesis 7.11,12 ⁵Genesis 7.11

beneath being loosed by eruptions, earthquake and volcanic activity. It would seem that subterranean waters issued forth as giant water spouts and fountains.

What devastating effects these eruptions and earthquakes under the sea would have had upon the dry land! Massive tidal waves, hundreds of feet high, moving at great speed, raced across vast areas of land, doing untold damage to the earth's topography. An earthquake in one area of the seabed would send water rushing in one direction, creating unheard of currents, moving vast amounts of sediments and covering dead plants and animals in various layers. Other subterranean eruptions would bring water and sediment from another direction, burying a different set of plants and animals on top of the previous layers.

THE SORTING ACTION OF MOVING WATER

Moving water invariably sorts the solids suspended in it. It deposits them when it slows down on entering a larger body of water and reduces speed. It usually sorts according to specific gravity, so that fine clay particles are deposited together, and heavier sand grains also are deposited together.

We often find shells of the same size and weight on the seashore. They have been sorted by currents and waves, and washed up by eddying water on a beach. Similarly, the remains of plant, animal and marine creatures were sorted by the flood waters and deposited. Each layer contained creatures of similar weight and size that were encased and fossilised in rocks by enormous pressures from above.

Geologists, indoctrinated with the theory of evolution, see in these layers of sorted fossils, evidence that the lower levels contained primitive creatures from ancient times. Upper levels are supposed to be of more recent times with more complex creatures etc. Science, however, has some difficulties in explaining this. Layers containing creatures believed to be of recent origin are sometimes found in lower levels and covered with layers containing creatures considered to be of ancient origin. Then there are odd occasions when a creature believed to be of recent origin is found fossilised in rocks believed to be of ancient origin. These occurrences are easily explained by the Biblical account of the flood.

THE FORMATION OF COAL

Mention has been made of the pre-flood climate, one of warmth and humidity, fostering the growth of lush, tall tropical forests from pole to pole. Devastating waters swept away and sorted these enormous forests, depositing the material in vast strata. Thick layers of vegetation were repeatedly covered by layers of clay, sand or pebbles, etc. The enormous overhead weight of water and sediment, along with the pressures of the thrust and movement of the quaking earth, compacted and heated the vegetation, turning it into the coal we know today. It is believed that oil was formed in a similar but more complex process.

It is interesting to note that tree trunks in the strata are often found to be pointing in the same direction, suggesting the sorting work of flood waters. Occasionally a petrified tree trunk is found in a vertical position. Had the coal seam been built up over millions of years, the top of the tree would never have survived. As a result of the flood, a bottom heavy tree would have settled vertically, with other vegetation quickly packing in around it.

MAMMOTHS AND DINOSAURS

When the windows of heaven were opened, the protective layer of water vapour disappeared. Heat, which had been trapped in the atmosphere quickly escaped. In addition, the atmosphere would have been heavily polluted by dust from the volcanic eruptions, keeping out warmth from the sun. Here we suggest is the cause of the ice age.

It is estimated that 5 million mammoths are buried and frozen along the coastlines of northern Siberia and Alaska. Some are in remarkably good condition. The world-wide flood, followed by the ice age, assist our understanding of this phenomena, although science still has difficulty explaining it. Similarly science cannot explain properly why dinosaurs suddenly became extinct. However it is evident that they did not survive the vast climatic and geological changes which affected the earth after the flood.

WHERE DID THE WATER GO?

In due course this devastation came to an end for we read in Genesis:

‘And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged; The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained; And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.’⁶

This water has not returned to the firmament above, because it is not there now. Obviously, most of the water must now be located in the present seas. Pre-flood seas must have been very shallow. To accommodate such quantities of water, the seas would have been substantially deepened. To compensate, the mountains were pushed up higher.

‘Thou didst set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be shaken. Thou didst cover it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled; at the sound of thy thunder they took to flight. The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place which thou didst appoint for them. Thou didst set a bound which they should not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth.’⁷

These verses tell of the mountains rising to compensate for the deepening of the oceans, as the flood waters dispersed to the newly deepened seas, at God’s command. That they concern the flood, and not creation is made clear by the last verse. It is a clear reference to the rainbow promise, which God made to Noah, saying He would never again bring such a flood upon the earth. It is noteworthy that God has placed a bound or boundary over which the sea may never proceed again.⁸

This is in agreement with the evidence of science. All the great mountain ranges of the world such as the Himalayas, the Andes, the Appalachians, the Alps and the Urals are made from sedimentary rocks containing fossils, an indication that they were formed beneath the sea, and have been pushed up to form the mountains of today.

⁶Genesis 8.1-3 ⁷Psalms 104.5-9 RSV ⁸Genesis 9.9-11

The propositions put forward in this section are based upon what has been observed. It is not the facts that are disputed, but their interpretation. Those who believe the Bible's account that these changes which took place over a short period as a result of the flood, challenge the geologists, who say they took place over millions of years.

FLOOD TRADITION AND FOLK LORE

In the folk lore of many widely scattered races around the world there are traditional stories, telling of a great flood similar to that recorded in the book of Genesis. The stories have been reported, not by religious people, but by anthropologists, who included these anecdotes in their written reports.

These stories were passed from father to son from ancient times. These unwritten stories concern a great calamity which occurred to each race in ancient times. Although they vary widely in content, they have a remarkable similarity to the Genesis account. All contain three basic factors:

- all living creatures were destroyed in a world wide flood.
- something similar to the ark saved a few creatures and individuals.
- there was a miraculous preservation of the seed of mankind.

The descendants of Noah passed on this terrible story to their children, with warnings to be obedient to God. When the races were scattered around the world, discrepancies began to appear in their stories and some of the details were changed.

No story from outside the Bible contains all the details of the Genesis account. However, when they are collated, it becomes obvious that all the basic facts are covered. What is missing in one account may be found in another story. Thus it can be seen that all the stories came from the descendants of Noah (see the chart overleaf for details). Fuller accounts may be found in the book, 'The Deluge Story in Stone.'⁹

THE FLOOD IN NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING

Those who insist that the early chapters of Genesis are myth should note that the flood is regarded as fact in a number of places in the New

⁹Byron C Nelson, 'The Deluge Story in Stone' - Publisher: Bethany Fellowship Inc.

	Man in transgression	Divine destruction	Favoured family	Ark provided	Destruction by water	Human seed saved	Animal seed saved	Universal destruction	Landing on mountain	Birds sent out	Survivors worship	Divine favour on saved
Assyrian / Babylonian 1												
Assyrian / Babylonian 2												
Persia 1												
Persia 2												
Syria												
Asia Minor												
Greece												
Egypt												
Italy												
Lithuania												
Wales												
Scandinavia 1												
Scandinavia 2												
Lapland												
Russia												
China												
India 1												
India 2												
Alaska												
Canada (Esquimaux)												
Canada (Thlinkut) 1												
Canada (Thlinkut) 2												
Canada (Cree)												
United States (Cherokee)												
United States (Mandan)												
United States (Lenni Lenape)												
United States (Takoe)												
Mexico (Papngon)												
Mexico (Pimas)												
Mexico (Toltecs)												
Mexico (Aztecs)												
Mexico (Michoacan)												
Nicaragua												
Peru												
Brazil												
Leeward Islands												
Fiji Islands 1												
Fiji Islands 2												
Andeman Island												
Hawaii												
Sumatra												



 = Full representation of Biblical idea
 = Partial representation of Biblical idea

Chart showing the various accounts from many sources complimenting the Biblical account

Testament. In Hebrews we read that God gave Noah warning to build the ark, clearly supporting the fact of the flood:

‘...Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.’¹⁰

The Apostle Peter wrote similar words in his second letter:

God ‘...spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;’¹¹

JESUS BELIEVED THE FLOOD ACCOUNT

The Lord Jesus Christ believed the flood to be fact and not fiction. He quoted from the Genesis account in a most significant manner. He likened the moral conditions that prevailed amongst the generation leading to the flood, to that of the generation leading to his return to earth:

‘But as the days of Noe (Noah) were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.’¹²

Would Jesus have used this example, to warn men and women in our day of impending world wide catastrophe if it was not true? of course not. If we believe the Lord Jesus Christ to be a fact of history, who are we to doubt his judgment concerning the flood? If we believe the New Testament, then we must accept the Genesis flood as fact.

People do not realise the dangers which they face. They continue to ‘eat, drink, and be merry.’ They aim to enjoy life to the full, often at the expense of others. Time is squandered in pointless pastimes, ignoring the consequences. This happens when people turn their backs upon God. However, the Bible has given us a full warning and has also shown us the way of escape.

¹⁰Hebrews 11.7 ¹¹2 Peter 2.5 ¹²Matthew 24.37-39

The Apostle Peter warns:

‘But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.’¹³

The coming judgment is not one of flood, but of fiery and desolating warfare and earthquake activity.

WARNINGS FOR OUR DAY

People scoff and ridicule talk of the return of Jesus. They laugh at the Bible’s record of the flood catastrophe. They refuse to believe that it is a warning to us. The Apostle Peter has well summed up the position:

‘Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.’¹⁴

Speaking of this time, Jesus said:

‘But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.’¹⁵

Jim Reid
Oxted, Surrey

¹³2 Peter 3.10 ¹⁴2 Peter 3.3-7 ¹⁵Luke 21.34-36 NKJV

GOD'S MANIFESTO FOR A NEW WORLD

AT ELECTION TIME, political parties in the U.K. publish manifestos - documents full of promises about what they will do if elected. None of these promises can match the undertakings made by God in **His Manifesto**.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

'...The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.' ... 'they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.'¹

LAW AND ORDER

'...he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth...'²

HEALTH

'Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing...'³

THE ENVIRONMENT

'...that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.'⁴

THE ECONOMY

'And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.'⁵

HOUSING

'And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.'⁶

DEFENCE

'And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places;...'⁷

¹Revelation 11.15, Isaiah 2.4 ²Isaiah 11.3,4 ³Isaiah 35.5,6 ⁴Revelation 11.18 ⁵Isaiah 25.6
⁶Isaiah 65.21 ⁷Isaiah 32.17,18

EDUCATION

‘For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.’⁸

God, in publishing **His Manifesto**, does not ask for your vote. He wants you to be ready for the return of His son Jesus Christ to the earth to bring about the only change of government that really matters. He, Jesus, is the Divinely appointed future world ruler who will ensure that God’s promises are carried out.⁹

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⁸Habakkuk 2.14 ⁹Acts 17.31

COVER PICTURE

THE MAJESTIC SNOW capped peaks of mount Hermon are the subject of this month’s cover picture. The mountain is situated in the north of the land of Israel and rises to a height of more than 2700 metres (9,000 feet). Its highest peaks are covered with snow for most of the year and from its foothills flow the streams which eventually become the river Jordan.

To the Israelites the name Hermon has been associated with the power of Almighty God the Creator of all things. The words of the Psalmist remind us of this: *‘The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them. The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.’*¹

In the 4th century AD, Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem claimed that mount Tabor was the place of the transfiguration. However it is more likely that the slopes of Mount Hermon, not far from Caesarea Phillipi is the place where Peter, James and John witnessed those events. Matthew tells us that Jesus was previously in that region with his disciples.² (See ‘In the Footsteps of Christ page 23).

If we truly become disciples of Jesus we shall also witness the divine glory when Jesus returns to establish his kingdom. At that time he will stand again on one of the mountains of Israel, as the divinely appointed king of the world.³

¹Psalm 89.11,12 ²Matthew 16.13 ³Psalm 2.6-8; Psalm 48.1,2

In the Footsteps of Christ (4)

IN THE PREVIOUS articles in this series we have seen how that most of the mighty acts and miracles performed by Jesus were done, not in Jerusalem, but in the region of Galilee, towards the north of Israel, the area renowned for its fruitfulness and its farming and fishing activities.

The unsophisticated population of this region gladly accepted the teaching of Jesus, supported by the authority which Jesus demonstrated by his miracles. A similar principle we generally find in operation today - that it is not the wise of this world who accept the teaching of Jesus, like the religious rulers in Christ's day, based in Jerusalem, but *'the poor of this world rich in faith.'*¹ It was the meek, the lowly, the poor in heart, the common people who heeded the message of Jesus, who himself became recognised as a Galilean, having been brought up in Nazareth, a town of Galilee and having spent most of his ministry there.

AT GENNESARET

In the last article we found Jesus at Bethsaida, where he tried in vain to get away from the crowds who constantly thronged him, and we then pictured Jesus walking on the water, the disciples having commenced rowing *'to the other side.'*²

Having now passed over the lake, they reached the shore at a place called Gennesaret. They had rowed through the night and it must have been early morning when they arrived on this coast. Yet Jesus was soon recognised, and word travelled quickly around the region. Imagine the

¹James 2.5 ²Mark 6.45

scene as hundreds of people began to bring out the sick, carrying them out in beds, laying them in the streets, and beseeching him to even touch their garments. *'...and as many as touched him were made whole.'*³

Imagine the scene, the anticipation, the joy of the sick being instantly healed. Such was and is the power which Jesus has at his disposal, the same power which will be witnessed on the day of his return, when he will raise the dead and give eternal life to as many as have believed on him, and who have tried to live faithful lives as his disciples.

AT CAPERNAUM

From Gennesaret Jesus quickly departed to Capernaum, where again the multitudes thronged him, and this time Jesus used the opportunity to teach rather than to heal. He charged the people with coming to see him because *'they did eat of the loaves'*⁴ and to get some material benefit out of him. He told them that they should believe on him. *'...What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee?'*⁵ As if he had not already given them so many signs. They persisted, showing how that when Israel left Egypt, and were in the wilderness, signs were given to them each day, as the manna was provided in the desert. Jesus used the opportunity to show that he was the true bread from heaven, and those that come to him would never hunger. *'I am the bread of life',*⁶ said Jesus, the living bread, which if a man eat, he shall live forever. *'Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.'*⁷ This was just too much for the Jews who, under the Law of Moses had to abstain from blood, and this saying of Jesus truly offended them, and even some of his disciples *'went back, and walked no more with him.'*⁸ To the true disciple, the symbolic eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood is an event celebrated weekly in the memorial meeting, where bread, the symbol of his body, and wine, the symbol of his blood, are taken in remembrance of Jesus.

Jesus was moved by the sight of so many leaving him because of what he had said, and he asked the twelve whether they also would go away. *'...Lord, to whom shall we go?'* asked Peter. *'thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ (the anointed one of God), the Son of the living God.'*⁹ Here at least was proof to Jesus that a few did heed his words and knew that he was the Son of God.

³Mark 6.56 ⁴John 6.26 ⁵John 6.30 ⁶John 6.35 ⁷John 6.54 ⁸John 6.66 ⁹John 6.68,69

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Following the previous incidents, centred around various towns and villages of Galilee where Jesus went preaching the kingdom of God, he seemed always to be on the move, from one place to the next, healing, feeding and teaching. It was a hectic programme which must have been immensely tiring, with crowds following him, with opposition from the religious leaders and those who demonstrated lack of faith. Yet the Gospel message was preached, whether they truly had ears to hear or not.

It appears at this time that the popularity of Jesus was now beginning to wane, since he was more concerned with the preaching work rather than the healing and feeding, and even his disciples began to physically tire with all the constant moving backwards and forwards around the region of Galilee. The time had come for Jesus to give to his closest disciples even more proof that he was the Son of God, and hence the reason for the transfiguration. They too needed encouragement to respond to the words of Jesus, and to be even more convinced that indeed he was the Son of God.

Let us picture the scene that followed. Jesus took with him Peter, James and John, the three disciples who were fishermen, and who appeared to be the closest to Jesus, and he led them up into a high mountain. Some suggest that this was Mount Hermon, the snow-capped mountain in the north and source of the river Jordan, whose life-giving waters flowed southwards through the land to the Dead sea. Here, high above the surrounding area the three disciples saw a change come over Jesus, as suddenly his clothing became brilliant white, as white as snow, and they saw their Lord transfigured. The Greek word for transfigured is '*Metamorphoom*' meaning to be metamorphosed or changed, just like the caterpillar which changes into a beautiful butterfly. Jesus changed, and writing thirty years afterwards about the incident, Peter tells us what that change was. He tells of the majesty, and the glory, to which he was an eyewitness. We see a picture of Jesus here in glory, a sight which terrified his disciples. We can imagine their amazement when suddenly there appeared to them a vision of the prophets Elijah and Moses, talking with Jesus.

Peter, terrified, said to Jesus '*...Master, it is good for us to be here*'¹⁰ and he suggested that they set up three tabernacles, one for Jesus, one for

¹⁰Mark 9.5



Capernaum today viewed from the Lake of Galilee

Elijah and one for Moses. Suddenly a cloud enveloped them and a voice came out of that cloud declaring ‘...*This is my beloved Son; hear him.*’¹¹ The disciples looked around and Elijah and Moses had disappeared, leaving them alone with Jesus. What an impressive experience to these three men, dispelling any doubts as to who exactly Jesus was. The opposition of the religious rulers would now pale into insignificance against this direct declaration of God. This was to be a sign to them of the Kingdom of God, and Jesus told them to tell no man, until he had risen from the dead. This statement must have puzzled them since at this time it had not really sunk in that he was going to die, even though he had previously told them this.

DISCIPLES SENT OUT

From the Mount of transfiguration Jesus returned to Galilee, where he performed more miracles and continued his preaching work. He healed a dumb boy, and miraculously provided tribute money and by this act showed that the servant of God must obey the laws of the land, where they

¹¹*Mark 9.7*



Mount Hermon from the South West

are not in conflict with the laws of God. He also settled a dispute between the disciples as to who would be the greatest in the kingdom of God. Setting a little child in the midst of them he said, '*...Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*'¹² That settled the dispute, since their ambitious pride would not only debar them from the greatest place in the kingdom, but even the kingdom itself, a lesson in humility for all of us.

From Galilee, Jesus journeyed to Jerusalem in order to keep the feast of tabernacles. It was a difficult journey for Jesus, since the Jews were now trying to trap him and silence him. This final year of Jesus' ministry was one of confrontation and condemnation of him by the religious rulers. His stay in Jerusalem caused division among the people. Some recognised him as a great prophet whilst others thought of him as a deceiver, and could not see how that Christ the promised Messiah, could come from Galilee.

Jesus condemned the Pharisees for trying to trick him to act against the

¹²Matthew 18.3

law of Moses in the case of the woman taken in adultery. He showed them up as hypocrites. Then, having told them that he himself was even in the purpose of God before the days of the patriarch Abraham, they tried to stone him. But Jesus avoided them and hid himself, departing from the temple.

Having now been forced to leave Jerusalem, Jesus travelled northwards again to the region of the Samaritans, where he sent out seventy disciples in pairs. He gave them a commission to visit every city and place, to heal the sick and to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom. They were to take no money or other necessities, but were to rely on the hospitality of those to whom the Gospel was to be preached. Jesus meanwhile returned to Judaea, beyond Jordan.

This work was exhilarating to the seventy, who returned to him, rejoicing at the mighty works which they had been able to perform in the name of Jesus. This was a foretaste of those mighty works which the glorified servants of Christ will be able to carry out in the age to come.

TEACH US TO PRAY

While he was in Judaea, Jesus visited the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus at Bethany, a village just outside Jerusalem on the road to Jericho. This faithful little family unit of two sisters and a brother, gladly heard the message of Jesus and became his close friends. He resorted to their house just before his arrest, trial and crucifixion.

One day, whilst Jesus was praying, his disciples were obviously watching him, because as soon as he finished his prayer, one of the disciples asked him, ‘...*Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples*’.¹³ This was the cue for Jesus to teach them what is known as ‘*The Lord’s Prayer*’, a prayer of only 58 words, as it appears in Luke’s Gospel record¹⁴ This contains all the essential ingredients of acceptable prayer to God as follows:

- The praise and worship of God.
- Praying for God’s kingdom to come.
- Looking to God for our daily provisions.
- The recognition of our need for forgiveness.
- Asking God for deliverance from evil.

¹³Luke 11.1 ¹⁴Luke 11.2-4

He also taught them that God will hear the prayers of His servants, and will answer their petitions, if they are in accordance with His will. The power of prayer can achieve far more than our own actions. During his ministry Jesus was seen many times in prayer to God.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

Jesus' friend Lazarus was seriously ill, and not surprisingly his two sisters sent for Jesus to come and heal him saying '*behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.*'¹⁵ Jesus on hearing this, explained that the sickness was not unto death, but to show the glory of God, and the power of God vested in him. Jesus therefore stayed where he was for a further two days. He had previously moved away from the area because of the open hostility shown towards him.

Imagine the consternation and sadness in the household of Mary and Martha, when Lazarus actually died. After the two days, Jesus told his disciples that they should go into Judaea again. He said to them, '*...Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.*'¹⁶ Jesus knew in himself that Lazarus was dead, but the disciples thought that he was sleeping, until he told them plainly and bluntly '*Lazarus is dead*'¹⁷.

When Jesus arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had been dead for four days. The scene was of friends and others coming to comfort Martha and Mary following the death of their brother. Had Jesus let them down? Had he deserted his closest friends in their time of need? Martha ran to meet Jesus when she heard he was coming, and greeted him with the comment that if Jesus had been there, Lazarus would not have died. But then, she showed her faith, believing that God would do whatever Jesus asked of Him. She believed that Jesus, even now, could raise him from the dead.

Jesus then said to Martha:

'...I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?'¹⁸

Yes indeed she did, and she went and called her sister Mary, who fell down at Jesus' feet, weeping.

¹⁵John 11.3 ¹⁶John 11.11 ¹⁷John 11.14 ¹⁸John 11.25,26

*'Jesus wept.'*¹⁹ These two words show Jesus as a man with the same feelings as ourselves, seeing the distress of the two sisters and overcome by the sadness of the occasion.

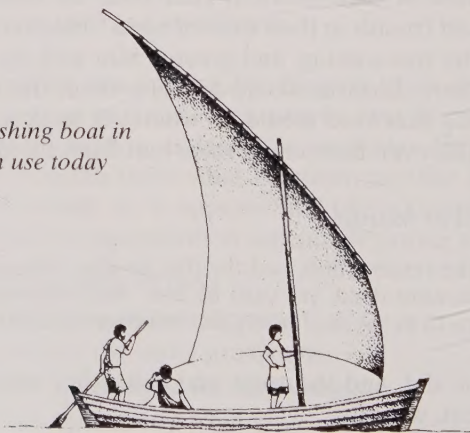
Couldn't he have healed Lazarus, so that he need not have died? This was asked by some, as Jesus was led to the sepulchre. *'Take ye away the stone'*²⁰ commanded Jesus. Martha openly objected since Lazarus' body would now have begun to decompose. Jesus reassured her that she would see the glory of God.

*'Lazarus, come forth.'*²¹ These three words spoken by Jesus in a loud voice, after he had prayed to God and openly manifested His name, brought the dead man to life. We can imagine the joy of that occasion - the dead man being brought to life, and restored to his family. Many believed on Jesus when they saw the power of God which was vested in him.

Here, in John's Gospel account, Jesus is shown to be *'the resurrection, and the life.'*²² God willing, in our final article in this series concerning the events which followed Christ's arrest and crucifixion, we shall see the greater meaning of these words which remind us of the true Christian hope - resurrection to life eternal at his second coming.

Clive Brooks
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*Old style of fishing boat in
Galilee, still in use today*



¹⁹John 11.35 ²⁰John 11.39 ²¹John 11.43-2 ²²John 11.25

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